

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the rejections set forth in the office action dated August 8, 2005, is respectfully requested. Applicant has cancelled claims 11 and 12, and claim 20 has been withdrawn, all without prejudice. Applicant has amended claims 1, 4, 6, 9, 12, and 16-19 to overcome the Examiner's §112 objections as well as the Examiner's §§102 and 103 rejections. These amendments are supported in the original specification. Thus, no new matter has been added by way of this amendment. Claims 1-9, 12, and 16-19 are currently pending.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication of allowability of claims 11 and 12 if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Rejection of Claims 1-12 and 16-19 Under 35 U.S.C. Section 112

The Examiner rejected claims 1-12 and 16-19 under 35 U.S.C. Section 112, second paragraph, as being allegedly indefinite for failing to particularly point out an distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The Examiner noted, in particular, that claims referred to one or both of an inner "split" ball and an outer "split" ball, whereas the specification provides for a split ball arrangement having a stationary inner ball and a moveable outer ball. Applicant has addressed the Examiner's rejection by amending the claims to remove the term "split". For example, claim 1 now recites a "housing means having inner ball means and outer ball means mounted therein" Applicant respectfully asserts that this amendment clarifies the claims and overcomes the §112 rejection.

The Examiner also objected to the recitation of "said securing arrangement" in claim 11. Applicant has now canceled claim 11, and incorporated its limitations into claim 9. Applicant has addressed the Examiner's concerns over the "said securing arrangement" recitation by now

reciting a “first securing arrangement” and a “second securing arrangement” in claim 9.

Applicant respectfully asserts that this amendment clarifies claim 9 and overcomes the §112 rejection.

The Examiner objected to the phrase “a block like base unit”, specifically noting that the term “like” allegedly renders the scope of the claims unascertainable. Applicant has addressed the Examiner’s rejection by amending claim 16 to remove the term “block like”. Applicant respectfully asserts that this amendment clarifies claim 16 and overcomes the §112 rejection.

With respect to claim 18, the Examiner objected to the phrase “a plurality of mounting surfaces and having mounted therein a plurality of lockable split balls.” The Examiner argued that the mounting surfaces are disclosed as the outwardly extending arms receiving bolts in holes H, and that the plurality of split balls are not mounted within those holes. Applicant has amended claim 18 to delete the offending language. Claim 18, as amended, recites “a housing having mounted therein a plurality of lockable balls” Applicant respectfully asserts that this amendment clarifies claim 18 and overcomes the §112 rejection.

Rejection of Claims Under 35 U.S.C. §§102 and 103

The Examiner rejected claims 9-10, 18, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. Section 102(b) as being anticipated by Aaras et al. (4,277,102), and claims 1-9, 16 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious in view of various combinations of patents. The Examiner indicated the allowability of claim 11 and 12 if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Prior to this amendment, claim 12 depended from claim 11, claim 11 depended from claim 10 and claim 10 depended from independent claim 9. Applicant has amended independent claim 9 to incorporate the limitations of claims 10 and 11. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully

Applicant : Clifford A. Wright
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asserts that claim 9 is now in condition for allowance. Claim 12 depends from claim 9, and is allowable for at least that reason.

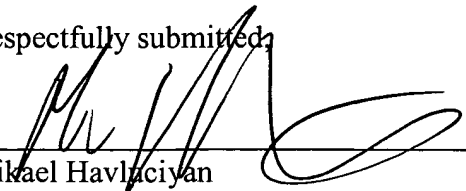
Applicant has further incorporated the limitations of claims 10 and 11 into independent claims 1, 16 and 18. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 1, 16 and 18 are also now in condition for allowance. Claims 2-8 depend from claim 1, and are patentably distinct from the prior art for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Claim 17 depends from claim 16 and is patentably distinct from the prior art for at least the same reasons as claim 16. Claim 19 depends from claim 18 and is patentably distinct from the prior art for at least the same reasons as claim 18.

Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are now in condition for allowance and respectfully request the same. If the Examiner has any questions regarding the foregoing, he is cordially invited to contact the undersigned so that any such matters may be promptly resolved.

Enclosed is a \$60 check for the Petition for Extension of Time fee. Please apply any other charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Date: December 8, 2005

Respectfully submitted,



Mikael Havlucian
Reg. No. 47,285

PTO Customer No.: 20985
Fish & Richardson P.C.
12390 El Camino Real
San Diego, California 92130
Telephone: (858) 678-5613
Facsimile: (858) 678-5099
Email: havlucian@fr.com
10577566.doc